

Douglass, Week 1
December 12, 2007

Questions Asked:

1. Is Taft Choice Program mainly for elementary students?
2. Central Location – Concern for younger children having to travel long distances
3. Will there be behavioral support staff to assist students? School location changes may impact students behavioral and staff may need assistance to help keeping kids on track and getting them back on track
4. Will there be a true alternative school for kids having trouble fitting in at larger schools?
5. What are the plans for the Special Education Center at Moten?
6. Will Draper ES be modernized?
7. Will there be professional development for teachers requiring additional certification?
8. How will inclusion model classrooms be implemented?
9. Will there be training for teachers?
10. Are we going to be doing more to in-source special education in the district?
11. How can we keep charter school money in the District when children move from school to school?
12. Will there be continued support for teachers seeking board certification?
13. How will closed building be used?

Top Concerns:

1. Inclusion – How will it be implemented?
2. Distance - alternative programs need to be in a central location
3. How will parents prepare for these changes? training for parents
4. Ensure classroom are not too large.

**Green ES, Week 1
December 12, 2007**

Questions for the Chancellor:

- Will boundaries change due to consolidation for walk-ability purposes (esp. from 13th to 22nd street)? Should some students from Green go to M.C. Terrell instead of Turner?

Yes, boundaries will likely need to be redrawn.

- Will Turner let go of its sixth graders or become K-8?
We will make final decision after community input has been received.
- Significant concerns about traffic/walking patterns (children crossing Alabama Ave. for example.) – at least six people voiced this concern.
- Use of closed facilities?

More community meetings will follow to provide feedback on future use of closed schools.

- What would be the earliest notification to teachers of proposed transfers, terminations, excessing, etc.?

No later than the Spring.

Top Concerns regarding the proposed plan

As far as being consolidated with Turner, where will extra staff be placed if there aren't enough students to support the staff after consolidation?

With Green identified as restructuring – how is that factored into the new plan?

Is this the last school closing process?

Complaint that we're already taking off the table music and art programs that are proposed in the plan.

Impact on teachers – what can DCPS do to lessen teacher concerns regarding their employment status?

Suggestion to have a meeting for the teachers at the impacted schools.

If not Turner, then Malcolm X? Will people be informed that Malcolm X is an open space school? What is the status of the Turner's renovation or rebuild?

Is the comprehensive staffing model non-negotiable despite fluctuations in enrollment?

Chancellor's approach to informing the parents/getting more parent feedback?

Suggestion to have school-based meetings prior to making a final decision.

Suggestion to provide yellow bus transportation from Green, for example, to one of the community meetings.

Additional notes

~ Need to include receiving schools on the list to lessen confusion about where people go (i.e. Green/Turner/Malcolm X as opposed to Green only)

Questions/Concerns from Moten/Wilkinson Week 1

- Parents/Teachers think that Wilkinson is a better school.
- How much money to modernize Moten?
- What about the staffing when closing the school?
- They propose that Wilkinson does not close.
- What will happen to Head Start Program?
- Does Wilkinson have enough square footage to accommodate Head Start?
- What will happen to all the money spent on books, etc.?
- What schools did the chancellor visit?
- Are we streamlining the enrollment process?
- What happens to students when modernization takes place?
- What is the date of the final decision?
- Why do they want to close Wilkinson so bad?
- Does the mayor have a plan for vacant buildings?
- What will happen in the winter when it snows and students cannot get up the hill to Moten?
- Are the schools set in stone?
- What are we doing about getting Spanish and African American history in every school?
- How do Charter Schools get funded?
- When students leave Charter Schools and come back to DCPS, where does the money go?

PR Harris EC, Week 1
December 12, 2007

Top concerns about the plan

- I have several issues that I want answers to – have seven years in school. I am concerned with transportation, fighting within school system, coming from Southeast, Southern Avenue and the learning abilities inside your classrooms since my child is in 2nd grade. Fighting, learning, working well with others, cafeteria, playground. Overall, the school climate. For those who do not have transportation – those who have to get up at 5:00 a.m., do we walk them to class?
- I have two students at Patterson ES – one is special needs. I was wondering about the staffing that we will be providing for the students coming, the ones that are already here, plus the bumping situation for the staff as well as the lottery and how that money will be used (DC lottery allocations funds).
- One of my concerns would be safety; we need more crossing guards, aides for both sides of the street. It is very dangerous for them to cross.
 - The overcrowding for the parents and teachers and the oversized classrooms that can take away from the children's classroom.
- I am wondering if you are prepared to deal with the mixing of neighborhoods. Are you going to be able to deal with the reaction from the mixing of neighborhoods?
- I have a question about the staff. Will the teachers go to the schools where the children were assigned? Also, if you have a SPED (Special Education) program, a cluster program, how do you plan to reassign programs?
- We are just now back into the new Patterson. We were relocated to PR Harris and they enclosed rooms so we could be comfortable in that building. This is the same thing as three years ago – you are making decisions based on square footage, not children. We haven't fixed the new Patterson and there are additional needs we haven't addressed. We don't know about seniority of staffing, placement of students. There is a possibility that students would not get the best possible education. We already have issues with two grade levels – the spacing we have now is not going to be enough.
- I have a granddaughter. We are overcrowding the classroom now, kids are not interested in what they're learning. My concern is don't overcrowd them, if you put all of them in classrooms, there will be more overcrowding
- The concerns I have are not just for PR Harris, but for all students.
 - Teacher-pupil ratio – the idea that the children don't deserve to have classrooms where you have 16 students to a teacher isn't fair. They need the time and attention from the teacher. Reorganizing to have more than 16/18 to 1 is too much
 - Q: I would like to know how the WSF is going to be used if it is not abandoned. One reason we don't have art, music, PE is because of the WSF
 - Gifted and Talented Programs: I would like it seriously considered that there are gifted and talented programs and activities for all of the students, not just As and Bs. Many Gifted and Talented have C grades but they don't have the gifted and talented programs. If we had these programs for all students, there would be more students.
- Regarding the overall budget, DCPS has \$150 million budget. School closing only gets \$25 million. We've already backed away from art, music, other programs – we've already taken

these items off of the table. That's part of the process, those three items taken off of the table, what are we offering now instead. Where is the money coming from for new programs? This process also impacts closing additional schools in the out years. Issue of opening up and paying charter schools – taking money from DCPS into charter. How is this plan a part of the overall education plan for DC? What is it that we can expect in 5,4,3,2 years? The only thing I see is closing schools for one year.

- The effort and money into placing in other schools should be placed in revitalization. We should try to sustain the schools.
- I am a resident of Ward 8. Last year we opened at UDC (University of the District of Columbia) satellite campus. This academic year, Spring 07/08 – we have registered 700 people. Three themes: parents, communities, and students. If you are really concerned about the parents of our children, then you would take PR Harris off the table. We have child care, medical aid, etc. and we pay \$3.4 million/year and this benefits the parents. We have a state-of-the-art lab at PR Harris. Across the country, people talk about a holistic approach to education. A GED program is not always successful – but the one at PR Harris has been very successful.
- Parent at Patterson and PR Harris – I am a student at the UDC campus down there. One incident at PR Harris, I had one incident at PR Harris. I found that they dealt with my issue immediately. If you close PR Harris, will there be Head Start at Patterson? I also had a problem with the violence. We have three neighborhoods right at this school they need more staff. The children are all over the place, we need more staff. Right now, there need to be more parents at Patterson, but you want to bring more kids here and there are still lingering issues.
- Have you taken an analysis of those two schools to see if there are additional resources. If the program at that school didn't work, why would another consolidation work? We have programs that combine with the community. We have wraparound services and (PR Harris Community Center) – why would you add more resources instead of taking them away? Patterson was slated to close many years ago, not closed – number of students coming from the base have increased – parents believe in the resources being offered at Patterson. Why take away from a community with more needs than any others in the city? This is one option. We don't have any space in this building, none for computer labs, etc. If you have wraparound services, etc. – you won't have room to do that. What will happen to PR Harris – it won't benefit our community? This administration is new to the city. (enough is enough, etc.) I was elected, they were appointed....Our grades aren't what they are supposed to be, but we're working there. The three structural deficiencies are not schools, but 1. Transportation (\$70 mil) 2. Fixed costs (\$20 mil/year) and 3. Special education (private placement). The worst thing we could do is take away neighborhood schools. Our kids have to be safe – if not DCPS, where will you send them? "Divide and conquer. "
- I have two students at PR Harris, also am a DCPS employee – my kids have been at PR Harris and haven't brought a C home yet. I am worried that I can't walk them to school, as a single parent how am I going to deal with them going to another school? They want to get their

grades right, my children are in programs, what do I have to look forward to? If they close PR Harris, they will go to Maryland, before they go to another DC Public school.

- I live on Livingston Road, 3rd street is a really dangerous neighborhood for me. My daughter is in 8th grade, she's on the way to being on a path to achievement. The teachers are very responsive to me and I love the teachers because they care about the kids and I am a parent.
- I am a parent at Leckie Elementary School – my concern is that all of the children PR Harris, Patterson, Leckie, and Hendley proposed to go to Hart Middle School – If they all get to school, what is going to happen? We work hard to keep my son doing well in high school. We don't want our students to drop the ball. What is the adjustment with another move, what will they be prepared for between 6th and 8th grade - how do our students get from one grade to another? Now our students have to go from elementary school to middle school. All of us know, especially with our boys, 6th to 7th, 7th to 8th – that's where we lose our boys - they love science, math, technology... those are the things we want for our boys. Our children need a decent education in Ward 7, Ward 8 – consider our children your children. Our numbers are smaller, but please don't drop the ball on them...this is a big transition for them.
- I want to know how come the parents had no voice or say so in this issue? I think this is preposterous. I sat in my child's school and we put together 268 signatures – we should have a voice/opinion as to where our kids go. I thought this was a democracy not a dictatorship.
- I have a granddaughter that just went to Middle School. When she left Leckie Elementary School – that my most worry about which junior high school she would go to. I did not have any DCPS junior high school in mind because of all the chaos, the changes, etc., that were going on. I think charter schools were my best choice for her. I am not new to this. I am just amazed to see the change we had over the years were not for the better, but for the worse. As I used to say, the kids don't work for y'all, you work for the kids. I thank God for charter schools. Until you can do something with closing schools, moving elementary into middle, especially with some of the crimes, the gang bangers, etc. I just don't think it's safe.
- Once again, I just have some concerns and issues – it's not about the schools, it's about the parents in the schools. I agree with what you (last parent) said, if a child won't listen, won't do as they're told – DCPS isn't bad, every school is private, charter, college, technical, etc. I've been through it all. It's about the people inside the building. It's about your upbringing. If you want to do and have more, you have to strive to get more for your children who you know...without you, no one will look out for them. PR Harris holds about 300/560 students – Patterson/Hendley/and Leckie can't hold all these kids..they will be beefing, fighting, etc. When a child can't go to school to learn, they won't go to school...next thing you know, it's another statistic. The UDC program is wonderful. When PR Harris has a problem, people are very friendly...I feel that they are responsible. If you come, they will fit you in. Give us time to get parents together, so we can help our kids.

- Comment – She is absolutely correct, we have parents that are going to PR Harris to get an education. It's a blessing to have in our community, you have resources and you can just get up and walk to school to educate yourself. You're not only focusing, but if you take our space to help us, to help us learn, how are we going to educate ourselves? What are we going to do if we don't have those resources? We need the resources, the safety, the transportation – they can't get a ride to school. Are there going to be crossing guards on every corner? Safety is the number one thing that we have to think about. This isn't going to help, just add more problems.
- What I want to know is – why isn't the mayor here tonight? He's starting all these answers and all of these questions. He should answer because he wants to close our schools.
- Why can't you open up more recreation centers for our students -- for PR Harris students that work in Aftercare for All? Some of our kids are at school from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. every day.
- PR Harris Principal: I want to give some history – you all have not been privy to everything in the building. When I arrived in August '05, we had over 700 students. We lost 200 students in two years. In 1976, capacity for 1700 kids. We have had assessments of the building, no windows. With modernization, received \$1.7 million, we still need more. When they built walls for Patterson and PR Harris, ventilation doesn't work. We've had assessments of air quality. There have been many problems with square footage and the facility itself. We have been trying to identify solutions for a facility and solutions for children. I've asked numerous questions about “walkability.” I'm not going to give my opinion, but everyone should be able to get along. Look at the concepts of the administration and what should happen across the city. I've been in discussions on how we find solutions to everything. As we're going forward with these discussions, let's continue to ask questions, but we do have to address this facility. It's been a warehouse – no windows. There are facilities issues that we need to address.

Summary of Chancellor's response:

- Safety of students walking to school – one of the reasons to meet with the community is to understand the concerns about walkability. If there are specific intersections – we can work with crossing guards.
- Parents continue to have opportunities to further their learning – we have the UDC program at the PR Harris program. We want to grow capacity across the city. We want to expand capacity – PR Harris would be a great candidate.
- Usage of buildings – one of the things we will do – no decisions are final – not final until January. If we close the program, will find uses for the community for the buildings (health centers, early childhood, parks and recreation, etc.). This could be a huge benefit.

Questions

- From hearing people, charity starts at home, but when you mix Northeast, Southeast, etc., the manner in which our kids have brings conflict. The mentality of younger kids allows for division – parents can only teach our kids so much. We have to teach our children to be leaders not

followers. Also, it seems as though people send other people to stand in their stead. We want to speak to the chancellor.

- Concerns and questions about growing up in/around DC.
- When I was a teacher, in inner-city Baltimore, in one of the poorest neighborhoods. The experience I had was as a 2nd grade teacher. Took group scoring on avg. at 13th percentile, we looped with them. What that told me, the academic achievement with kids had nothing to do with ability and potential and everything to do with the quality of education.

Oh yes they are!

DCPS response: Even when we have teachers, they don't have the proper resources. They don't have what they deserve what they need, we can't get textbooks, pay people on time, etc. We are not doing right. In this city, you get two wildly different experiences. In America, you are supposed to get a leg up. Right now, we are determining educational outcomes based on their zip code.

Q: When you put all these kids in one classroom, they will get the best education?

These kids from Southeast, Northwest, etc. doesn't mean that they will get the best education.

That's not my personal experience, but is that going to impact class size? Right now, our buildings are underutilized, extra classrooms. We have to make sure the classrooms will be utilized.

We're using all of our classrooms. We had to convert one classroom to another classroom because of overcrowding.

Q: My question is related – Is it too unrealistic to hope for an average student teacher ratio of 16 students to 1 teacher?

Q2: My second question is about this weighted student formula. Are we going to abandon this to come up with something else?

Summary of Chancellor's response: We ultimately want a comprehensive staffing model in every school. It was developed based on feedback from parents and teachers (literacy, numeracy) (full time nurse, guidance counselor, social worker, etc., in every school, health teacher, technology coordinator – business manager and registrar).

Comment: When we are teaching in a school, takes away from every other child.

I am asking so that if children get one-on-one everyday with smaller classrooms, etc. We are open to looking at student-teacher-ratio, but we will look at that. If you need more teachers, why not hire more teachers.

Response: Increased level of resourcing, many resources not utilized – if we move forward as planned (\$23 million extra, put into the classroom)

Teacher Q: I want to piggyback, when we talk about funding, resources for the building, PR Harris has a lot of resources, but the money is not being put where they are supposed to be put it. I am on the LSRT and I looked at our budget, there is \$39K for special education. There is no way to get \$500 for supplies. That hurts – these principals are not doing with the money what they are supposed to be doing. When we come to central administration to address these concerns, what will you do about that?

Summary of Chancellor's response: We don't understand why resources are inequitable...the way we do budgeting and staffing isn't transparent. As we move forward and create budgets, we will create staffing plan for principals. Money/staffing is based on budget. We will provide flexibility to schools – we want them to have the ability to do that. We have to work with PTAs, LSRTs so they can make a trade-off about resources.

Teacher Q: I am a teacher at Patterson Elementary School, Ward 7 resident, graduate of DCPS – we've been through this before, the one problem that I have is that when you have your staff members come before us, as taxpayers to tell us that they have been somewhere for three years and are giving us the history. It's easy for the principal now to tell you about poor quality air. We came from Patterson and we lost money because we had four buses that transported us from Patterson to PR Harris. You need to hear those of us who have the long history. (29 years, ANC commissioner). Had people put up walls in PR Harris, we lived that, but we taught children and we taught children. Ask those of us who have been there and done that, but it's disheartening that we've been here for three years. The people at Patterson (some) were at PR Harris at one time. Some things were fixed. It was a loving, happy, school. We fought to stay in our community. We're not responsible for the cost overrides. We have a new face with a new plan, making the same list to save Patterson. We're not trying to save a building; we're trying to save a community. We're not paid to be here, but we want to be here. I will be certain to speak the truth. Have contractors speak to an educator. Please don't have administrators telling us about our communities.

Chancellor: This is why we're having these meetings. We want people with the knowledge and the community

Q: Juanita Jefferson – we're here speaking about Wilkinson Elementary School – I don't know what feasibility studies we have been don. First, it is slated that Moten will be moving into Wilkinson. We can accommodate those students. I understand that we'll close Wilkinson and renovate Moten Elementary School. Wilkinson is air-conditioned, underground parking, new library. How much would it cost to renovate Moten? I am concerned about the closing of Wilkinson.

Q:L I am a parent at Patterson Elementary School, two kids there. You are taking these kids from 5th grade to middle schools. You need a crossing guard at three intersections. Patterson is not fit for what you're trying to do. It will still be overcrowded. This space can't be stretched. This neighborhood, regardless of home training. You don't know what children will do. By the time he goes to 5th grade, he doesn't want to be with the bigger boys. How are we going to have resources for more? I have 22 kids on my cheerleading team and I can't imagine 42 on my team.

Chancellor: We are running 302 square feet/child. You are asking about resources. The national best practice is 140 square feet/child. In real terms, we can take all staff resources at one school and that is the level of staffing and resources needed for this full group of students. When we consolidate, this provides us with money to hire additional staff.

It's not about buildings, it's about children.

We do the calculations against space, but it is about children. This is the first of several conversations.